

SLAVERY

ITS EVILS AND REMEDY.

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"Thy chains are broken, Africa be free."

SECOND EDITION.

SHEFFIELD:
PRINTED BY J. BLACKWELL, IRIS OFFICE.

1829.

SLAVERY, &c.

ADDRESSED TO THE ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY.

O execrable son, so to aspire
Above his brother ! to himself assuming
Authority usurp'd, from God not given.
He gave us only over beasts, fish, fowl,
Dominion absolute. That right we hold
By his donation ; but man over man
He made not Lord ; such title to himself
Reserving, human left from human free.—MILTON.

GENTLEMEN,—It appears to me that no real Christian, who duly considers the nature of Slavery, and can divest himself of all long imbibed prejudices, can have the least hesitation in believing and declaring, *that Slavery is in its very nature SINFUL*. Your Society, at all events, have no doubts upon the subject. In proof of this, almost innumerable passages from the works published by you, may be adduced. I have now some of your monthly "*Reporter*" before me, and therefore I instance the following passages from one of them. In No. 40, you say, "We are perfectly willing to admit in the fullest and most explicit manner, the truth of that part of this charge which attributes to us the belief and avowal, that the title to such property (as slaves) is fundamentally vicious—*tainted to the very core*. Nay, we believe that the holding of *such property*, as it is held in the colonies, is *a crime* ; an outrage on the *spirit* and the *precepts of the Christian religion* ;—a practice radically inhuman, unjust, and unconstitutional ; a foul stain on the character of this country ; and a source of guilt, not to those only who directly participate in its polluted gains, but to all those who, with their eyes open, continue to uphold, or to support its enormities." Again, "Can we think of all the demoralizing and dehumanizing, and, still

more, the *anti-christianizing* effects of such a system, and not be at some loss to discover any very cogent reason for exempting the *Slavery* which exists in our colonies, from a moral reprobation as severe as we pass on the *Slave Trade* itself; or for exhibiting the former as *less* an outrage than the latter, on every principle of justice, humanity, and *true religion*."

The *sinfulness* of Slavery, then, will not be denied by you. Nor will you, I am persuaded, assert, that any inducements on earth ought to cause us either to continue, or to sanction for one moment, a clearly defined and mortal *sin*. It is, then, most undeniably the duty of every Christian man, who is implicated in the continuance of Slavery, —and in this country, every man from being allowed a voice in the government of the state, is implicated in the continuance of a national sin—to call with no weak,—no failing voice, on the executive to put away from us *immediately* and *for ever*—this "demoralizing, this dehumanizing, this *dechristianizing* system!"* I know that there are

* No one, who is not determinedly perverse, will affect to believe that by liberating the negro slaves is meant a setting them free from all restraints. No! they would then be bound by the restriction of wholesome laws, beneficial alike to themselves and their masters, whom they might be required to serve as hired servants, but not as slaves. The wages might be stipulated, so that it would require moderate labour from them, during six days of the week, to maintain a family. As it is said that *now* a free negro can, by working *one* day in a week, maintain himself, the masters would, when all were free, get their work done for a quarter of the money. Though in setting the slaves free, it is *not* proposed to set them free from due restraint, it is meant to set them free from oppression; from subjection to the despotic will of a tyrant. It is meant to free them from being bought or sold, or transferred with or without their wives and children to other masters. It is meant to set them free from murder, branding, flogging, mouth-breaking, &c. &c.; also to preserve the females from compulsory prostitution. It is further intended, to permit *all* to worship God how and when they think right; to have their children educated in the best manner that they can obtain;—to keep the Sabbath-day holy;---to be allowed preachers (unmolested) to instruct them in divine truths;---to possess and transmit property;---to be examined as credible witnesses in courts of justice;---to marry when and whom they like, whether black, brown, or white;---to be eligible, if duly elected, to serve in public offices;---in short, to convert them from mere goods and chattels into rational, accountable agents.

thousands, perhaps thousands of thousands of professing Christians in this country, who will cry out, "The thing is impossible!" Indeed! who told you so? Some reputed Solomon perhaps; but a greater than Solomon will tell you, and let me see the man among you who dares to contradict Him—that "*with God all things are possible*;" and if I was called upon to adduce some one instance, which would be among the most certain to procure *his* almighty assistance, it would be in aiding a Christian state in unanimously casting off *immediately and for ever*, a great and long polluting *national sin*.

If we had not possessed such assurance, forty years experience of the inefficacy of all cowardly and mercenary attempts to relinquish sin *in part*, and *by degrees*, might have sufficed to have convinced any man who believes in God, and his superintending providence at all, that such attempts are only kicking against the pricks; hurting ourselves, and doing nobody any good. The fact is, that we *talk* a great deal about *faith*—but when put to the test of showing it by our works, we are weighed in the balance, and found lighter than vanity itself. Vanity neither professes godliness nor humanity; we profess a great deal of both, and having none, are much the more guilty of the two. The sin of seeking to temporize in such a case, is in reality worse than the bare continuance of the sin itself would be. Its atrocious—its disgusting—its abominable nature, is continually kept before our eyes; we discern its horrid deformity; we acknowledge its offensiveness in the sight of God; and yet, at the same time, are ourselves devising palliatives or regulations for its longer continuance.

We may be permitted by a long-suffering God to go on still further determinedly insulting Him, by trampling on *his* laws, and fearing to confide in Him; but most assuredly, if we do, He will ere long arise to shake terribly the earth,—and then it will be clearly seen by all those who doubt his power, whether He can or cannot abolish slavery *instantly and totally*. Though there may not yet be many found among us, I am persuaded that there are *some*, and, I trust, that the number is increasing, who *dare* to put their trust in God, and that for the sake of even that

small number, He may in his mercy be pleased so to temper his justice, that the work in his hands, though effective, may not be greatly destructive.

Were slavery capable of being so ameliorating or modified, as to remove its sinful nature, we might be justified in endeavouring, as we have been doing year after year, for almost half a century (though in vain,) to bolster it up; but that is not the case,—it is, as you justly observe, “*fundamentally vicious, and tainted to the very core.*” Its fruit is, without exception, though abundant, bad; the tree, therefore, must be bad also. It will be labour in vain, nay, insulting to the Lord of the vineyard, in this case, to imitate the conduct of the dresser of the vineyard, and say, after so many vain trials, “Lord, let it alone this year *also*, till I shall dig about it and dung it; and if it bear fruit, (i. e., good fruit,) well; and if not, *then, after that*, Thou shalt cut it down.” No! this will not now do! We have dug about it, and about it; and have manured and watered it year after year with the blood, the sweat, and the tears of the innocent, till the soil must have become saturated; but the fruit remains, and must ever remain equally bad. There is now clearly only one way:—Down with it, and away with it at once, root and branch! Rid the land of it completely. We have been trying long enough of all conscience, to conciliate *man* at the expense of infringing on the laws of God. We have been sowing the wind, and what have we reaped? Why—the whirlwind?

Surely, then, it is *now* high time, that we pursued a different course, and begun to try, in good earnest, to conciliate God by putting away from us every law and practice of *man*, which is in its nature offensive in *his* sight. We cannot have worse success than we have had, after such repeated trials on the other plan. *It is possible* that we *may* have better. The experiment, at any rate, is worth making.

As, however, it is probable that a great proportion of the inhabitants are still unconvinced that slavery is “a crime—an outrage on the spirit and the precepts of the Christian religion,” it might be well to select from your

"*Reporter*," many of those numerous passages tending to prove "its demoralizing, its dehumanizing, and its anti-christianizing effects;"—effects, which must ever attach to it, under any modification, that can possibly be either adopted or enforced. This I had done to a considerable extent, but I found that they would swell the bulk of this address much beyond its prescribed bounds.

On the subject of *indemnification*, I can only say, that a government has at all times a right to discontinue any sanction which it may have extended to wicked practices, else the keepers of brothels and lottery offices would have had a right to demand indemnification. At any rate, in such a case, none can be due where loss is not sustained; and in relinquishing slavery, I am sure that all planters and proprietors, too, of the West Indian property, will, or may be *gainers* by the measure. If it prove otherwise, after six years' trial, why let them have indemnification, and welcome, though they certainly will not deserve a farthing. Have *they* indemnified the *slaves* for the *loss of their freedom*?

The following extract respecting the proceedings of 'The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts' is from the *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, No. 45 :—

"It is well known to our readers, that the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts is possessed of a considerable number of slaves, in the Island of Barbadoes, bequeathed to it upwards of a century ago, from whose labour it has drawn large sums of money, but for whose spiritual interests little until recently has been seriously attempted by it."

The heart really sickens, and cannot but feel a doubt of its own steadfastness, when it contemplates proceedings such as the *Reporter* presents,—proceedings not of West India planters, or personal proprietors of estates there, but those of men of the highest rank both in *Church* and *State*, nobles and prelates, men in the most exalted stations in the most *sacred* office; men selected, and solemnly engaged to do what? Why "*To propagate the Gospel in Foreign Parts*;" to propagate among poor benighted heathen the pure and holy Gospel of mercy, peace, and love; of the Saviour who voluntarily shed his blood to redeem all men, of every colour, from the bondage of sin. This is *the* object

for which this august Society (whose proceedings have been shewn) was established; and, incredible as the fact may seem, one of the means which they employ, and have employed, during more than one hundred years, has been dealing in the flesh, and blood, and lives of their fellow-creatures, and trading in the souls of men; of those very men, the *salvation* of whose souls is the declared object of their society. By this trade in the souls of men, great gains have accrued to the society, and the price of blood has annually served to replenish their treasury.

Well and truly, indeed, have you, gentlemen, asserted, as before stated, that Slavery is "*demoralizing, dehumanizing, and anti-christianizing.*" While such are its effects in a Society, such as this ought to be, and might be expected to be, who will be hardy enough to assert that temporizing will now do, or that anything short of that divine assistance which never was, which never will be afforded to endeavours to continue sin under any modification for a single moment, can avert from this nation the inevitable consequences of a continuance of such offensively insulting conduct.

The following reflections on the conduct of these kingdoms towards that of Hayti, are from the Reporter, No. 6:—

"No part of our policy is more inexplicable, on any rational principles, than that which we have pursued respecting Hayti. It can only be accounted for by the predominance of West-Indian prejudices and West-Indian influence. During our war with Buonaparte we might have secured to ourselves the friendship, the commerce, and the assistance of Hayti: we were deaf to the most urgent representations on the subject. By the exercise of the commonest courtesy, such as we scruple not to pay to the Dey of Algiers, or to the King of the Sandwich Islands, we might have conciliated the attachment, and made ourselves, in some degree, the masters of the destinies of the Queen of the Antilles. We might have even succeeded in inducing its inhabitants to adopt our language and habits; as, at one time, their chiefs would have zealously concurred in promoting every measure which would have served to detach them from France.—We repelled their offers of friendship. They went the length of even lowering their duties one-half in favour of England, in hope of conciliating our good will. We treated even this liberality with disdain, and replied to it by an Act of Parliament, which prohibited all intercourse between Hayti and Jamaica. They still persevered in their advances: they still continued to treat our commerce with peculiar favour. At length, our recognition of the independence of the Spanish provinces of South America, without the most remote

allusion to Hayti, whose claims of recognition were infinitely stronger than theirs; and the renewal of the insulting Act, prohibiting their commerce with Jamaica, left them no hope of obtaining that standing among nations, which they deemed essential to their independence and security, and by throwing themselves into the arms of France, and by sacrificing to her rivalry the interests of British commerce. It may not be known to our readers; it certainly was not known to ourselves, nor as far as we have been able to discover, to any member of the House of Commons, unconnected with the West Indies, or with the public offices of Government, that in the very last session of Parliament, (1824,) an Act was passed which contains the following clause:—

“And be it further enacted, that no British merchant ship or vessel shall sail from any place in the island of Jamaica to any place in the island of St. Domingo, nor from any place in the island of St. Domingo to any place in the island of Jamaica, under the penalty of the forfeiture of such ship or vessel, together with her cargo; and that no foreign ship or vessel which shall have come from, or shall in the course of her voyage have touched at, any such place in the island of St. Domingo, shall come into any port or harbour in the island of Jamaica; and if any such ship or vessel, having come into any such port or harbour, shall continue there for forty-eight hours after notice shall have been given by the officer of the customs to depart therefrom, such ship or vessel shall be forfeited; and if any person shall be landed in the island of Jamaica from on board any ship or vessel which shall have come from or touched at the island of St. Domingo, except in case of urgent necessity, or unless license shall have been given by the Governor of Jamaica to land such person, such ship shall be forfeited, together with her cargo.”

“When the date of this enactment is compared with that of the treaty which has been concluded with France, we cannot doubt that Boyer was influenced by it to agree to the severe terms which were exacted from him, seeing how completely he was excluded, by that galling measure, as well as by our declining all official intercourse with him, from every hope of the favour or friendship of this country.

“And now let it be calmly considered what will be our situation in the West Indies, in the event of another war with France. Our possessions there would not be worth a week’s purchase. The whole navy of England, and a fresh debt of one hundred millions, could not save Jamaica from becoming the revolutionized dependent of Hayti. Nothing, in such an event, can avert the loss of that and our other slave colonies, but a previous radical change of our whole colonial system. We must raise the free People of Colour to the full enjoyment of their rights and privileges as British subjects; and we must proceed with as little delay as possible, to give liberty to the slave. If we refuse to do this, the catastrophe we anticipate, may be delayed for a few years, but it cannot, in the constitution of things, be far distant.

“Those who desire to understand the nature of this new danger, and the means of averting it, ought to read two publications of Mr. Stephen, written upwards of twenty years ago, on the subject of Hayti, entitled ‘The crisis of the Sugar Colonies,’ and ‘The Opportunity;’ works which will now be found to wear almost a

prophetic air, such was the accuracy of the author's knowledge of the circumstances of the case, and his sagacity in appreciating their effects."

Is it possible for any Englishman possessed of one spark of patriotism (and where is the Englishman deserving of the honourable title, without one?) to read the foregoing extract without either blushing for his country,—glowing with indignation,—or praying for her amendment?

It contains facts that speak volumes,—volumes of reprobation, and overwhelming guilt, on shameful, dastardly, base, and cowardly meanness. These are the things, the proceedings, that sink a state. Every feature of the horrid and humiliating transaction seems marked with the character of the assassin, or the robber, who trembles in every limb for the safety of his blood-stained wealth, the polluted fruit of a long series of injustice, villainy, and oppression. Oh! how does the poor, despised, forsaken, new kingdom of emancipated Negroes, Hayti, tower, in this instance, above this rich, proud, slave-oppressing, ancient kingdom of free Britons, England! The latter sneaking under cover, fearing to do right; the former rising manfully above innumerable difficulties, and creating the means of purchasing that freedom from her deadliest foe, whom she abhorred, when she could not, on any honourable terms, obtain it from that state, which was bound by every generous, by every political motive, to have been her truest, her surest, her never-failing friend! Is this hole and corner work befitting the legislature of Great Britain? Is it credible? Is it *possible*, that such an act should have passed at all? that it should have *some way or other*, passed *unobserved*? Is it possible that there can be such a leaven of West India influence in the legislature of this country, as to have leavened the whole *lump*?

Well then, well and truly did you declare, gentlemen, that "Slavery is demoralizing, dehumanizing and anti-christianizing," if the legislature itself hath fallen a prey to its fascinating, baneful influence! Surely *now* it is time, if ever, to apply to the *arm of the Almighty* to free us from this foul stain, and to preserve our colonies, and our colonists, from the just and powerful vengeance and retaliation of the now feared, but once despised and slighted, forsaken

and injured nation of self-emancipated NEGRO SLAVES. It is thus that the wicked are ever justly entrapped in the works of their own hands! Oh! how are the mighty fallen! Is Britain then, become, by baseness and injustice, an object for the finger of scorn to be pointed at? This is humiliation indeed!

One thing is certain, *Slavery must and will be annihilated!* The mine is excavated,—the powder deposited,—the train is laid, and the match is lighted in the hand that can apply it at any moment. Britain has still the option left. How long it may be vouchsafed to her is uncertain. On one side are war, tumult, devastation, destruction, loss of property, and territory, disgrace, guilt, shame, scorn, derision, and God's displeasure; on the other, peace, gladness, happiness, gratitude, safety, plenty, security, riches, honour, self-approbation, and the certain blessing of the Almighty.

Now, let her choose! Her bane and antidote are both before her. The present moment is her own; the next is in the womb of futurity. There is an awful pause. It seems big with the fate of nations,—with the welfare of many people! May the powers of the righteous prevail, and the course of the angel of destruction be stayed! On you, gentlemen, much may, in this case, depend. You have, in this instance, ascended the hill, and constituted yourselves shining lights to direct the benighted; should, then, *you* become darkness, great, indeed, would that darkness be! You have not to learn, that Slavery is, in its very nature, sinful; you have boldly, distinctly, and loudly denounced it as such. There is but one course which *you can* consistently and honestly pursue. You have the ear of the public. There is then a talent committed to you which few else possess; on you rests a greater responsibility than on others. Let, then, the denunciation of Slavery *as sin* be sounding continually in the ears of the nation in general, and particularly in those of our governors, till the sin of Slavery shall be no more.

We have, at this time, a minister who has dared, in a case much less flagrant, to procure emancipation for reputed sufferers. In what sense were the *rights of Roman Catholics* stronger than those of *British-Born Negroes*? What

degree of comparison is there between the *wrongs* inflicted on the former, and those inflicted on the latter? If there were a majority favourable to granting the former concessions, there is a majority, I apprehend, of the nation, ten times as large, in favour of granting the latter.

If the former measure will tend to secure the peace, and promote the prosperity of the empire, the latter will do the same in a many-fold greater degree. The granting of concessions to the Catholics, cannot, of itself, permanently tranquillize Ireland; but the granting freedom to the slaves would assuredly (and it is the only measure that can do it) secure safety and prosperity to our West India possessions.

Surely then, it must be as politic as it is just, to put away from us immediately, and for ever, *a practice that is radically unjust, inhuman, and unconstitutional, fundamentally vicious, a crime and outrage on the spirit and precepts of Christianity, and tainted to the very core; a practice that is demoralizing, dehumanizing, and anti-christianizing.*"

P.S. *The reader is requested to circulate this Pamphlet among his neighbours as widely as possible, in order to prepare their minds for Petitioning Parliament to abolish Slavery speedily and totally.*